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ABERDEEN

# TALKING TO INDIA

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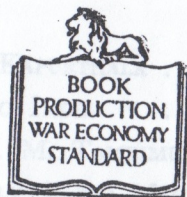
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TO DO IN AN AIR RAID, by *I. B. Soria*  
LETTER TO A NAZI, by *R. R. Desai*  
TALK IN ENGLISH, by *Sulhas Chandra Bose*  
FIVE SPECIMENS OF PROPAGANDA

Talks marked with an asterisk were written and broadcast  
by Indians or other Asiatics.

ILLUSTRATIONS



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## Introduction

THE B.B.C. broadcasts in forty-seven languages, including twelve Asiatic languages. Five of these belong to the mainland of India, but Hindustani is the only (Indian) language in which transmissions are made every day. The Hindustani broadcasts, including news bulletins, occupy eight and a quarter hours a week. There is also an English language programme intended primarily for the European population and the British troops.

But in addition to these programmes, three quarters of an hour every day is set aside for English broadcasts aimed at the Indian and not the British population. It is from this period that the talks in this book have been selected. The main reason for keeping this service going is that English, although spoken by comparatively few people, is the only true lingua franca of India. About five million Indians are literate in English (including some hundreds of thousands of Eurasians, Parsis and Jews) and several millions more can speak it. The total number of English speakers cannot be more than 3 per cent of the Indian population, but they are distributed all over the sub-continent, and also in Burma and Malaya, whereas Hindustani, spoken by 250 millions, has hardly any currency outside Northern and Central India. In addition, the people who speak English are also the people likeliest to have access to short-wave radio sets.

The work of organising and presenting the English language programmes from London has been done mainly by Indians, in particular by Mr. Z. A. Bokhari. A fairly large proportion of the speakers have also been Indians or other Orientals. Much that is broadcast (for instance, plays, features and music) is not suitable for reproduction in print, but otherwise



the talks included in this book are a representative selection. It will be seen that they are predominately "cultural" talks, with a literary bias. Frequent or regular speakers in this service have been E. M. Forster, T. S. Eliot, Herbert Read, J. F. Horrabin, William Empson, Desmond Hawkins, Stephen Spender, Edmund Blunden, Clemence Dane, Bonamy Dobree, Cyril Connolly, Rebecca West, and other writers have also broadcast from time to time. At least one half-hour programme every month has been devoted to broadcasting contemporary English poetry. Obviously the listening public for such programmes must be a small one, but it is also a public well worth reaching, since it is likely to be composed largely of University students. Some hundreds of thousands of Indians possess degrees in English literature, and scores of thousands more are studying for such degrees at this moment. There is also a large English-language Indian Press with affiliations in this country, and a respectable number of Indian novelists and essayists (Ahmed Ali, Mulk Raj Anand, Cedric Dover and Narayana Menon, to name only four) who prefer to write in English. It is these people, or rather the class they represent, that our literary broadcasts have been aimed at.

In order to give a true balance, some talks of a more definitely political type have been printed as an appendix, including five passages from weekly news commentaries. These are not consecutive, as they have been specially chosen from weeks when the war situation was being discussed, and Axis propaganda answered, in general terms. For the purpose of comparison we also include a verbatim transcript of a broadcast from Berlin by the Bengali leader, Subhas Chandra Bose. This has been chosen because it represents, as it were, the high-water mark of Axis propaganda. The general run of Axis propaganda to India is poor stuff, but Bose, who is potentially as important a quisling as Laval or Wang Ching Wei, is in a different category, and his speech is worth examining in detail.

It will be seen that for propaganda purposes Bose is reduced to pretending that the Axis powers have no imperialist aims,

and that "the enemy" consists solely of Britain and the U.S.A. Actually, this speech is remarkable for containing a reference to the war in China. So far as I know this is the only occasion on which Bose has mentioned the Sino-Japanese war, and even then he is obliged to claim that in some mysterious way it has changed its character during the past year or two. (Only a few years back Bose was prominent on various "aid China" committees.) But there is one thing for which you would search in vain through Bose's many broadcasts, and that is any admission that Germany is at war with Russia. This fact does not fit in with his general propaganda line, and so it has to be simply ignored. Nor does he on any occasion make any reference to the fact that both Italy and Japan possess subject Empires, or that the Germans are forcibly holding down some 150 million human beings in Europe. In other words, he is obliged to avoid mention of the major issues of the war, and of somewhere near half the human race.

There is a difference between honest and dishonest propaganda, and Bose's speech, with its enormous suppressions, obviously comes under the latter heading. We are not afraid to let these samples of our own and Axis broadcasts stand side by side.

GEORGE ORWELL.



reconstruction as the Soviet writers do of their Five Year Plan. Among the essays, one finds to-day sketches, full of hope and enthusiasm, about the guerrilla areas. There are portraits of heroes and martyrs of the war, both on land and in the air. Many such heroes are very ordinary men, such as the gunner in the "Third Rate Gunner" and the very touching illiterate peasant in Yao Hsueh Hen's "Half a Cart of Straw Short," both of which appeared in the *New Writing*. Shortly before the fall of Hong-Kong, I saw a poem in a newspaper which illustrates the constructive spirit of war-time Chinese writers. It is called "The Tattooed Wall," and is by Lin Huo Tze :

*The Tattooed Wall*

Few countries have walls  
More magnificent than those of China !  
A veteran sailor,  
The pigment of war  
Grained into his chest,  
Needling his body with dragons and tigers,  
A sign of his devotion to his love.  
He never belittles himself,  
And holds his head high in the street,  
Even if roof-beams and columns fall around him,  
The whole city about his feet,  
He with the strongest of voices,  
The largest of eyes,  
Calls to the passers-by in uniform  
And the unarmed citizens.  
Let him be as a revelation to these people,  
For he has survived the bloodiest fighting.  
Every inch of his body bears its stains.  
When they stop to stare at him  
He tells them legends of tattooing ;  
Long ago they were wise,  
Shielding themselves with tattoo  
Against fierce beasts and all besiegers.  
The wall of China to-day  
Likewise stands as a guard.  
Look, his chest is heaving,  
There is a loud voice raised in the open.  
Few countries have walls  
More magnificent than ours !

THE MAN IN THE STREET

BY J. M. TAMBIMUTTU

TO-DAY I want to say something about the London Underground—not about its technical side, but about the peculiar atmosphere of the stations, and the new kind of social life that seems to be growing up there as a result of the war.

The Underground is London's principal method of transport. Think of Richmond in Surrey, where the Thames flows through stately parks and the youths are happy in bathing costumes. Or of historic Hampton Court, where Cardinal Wolsey entertained King Henry VIII, and the low-lying river country surrounding the Tudor Palace. It is good to think of these country scenes from the heart of busy London, and one may imagine that they are distant memories not to be easily recaptured. Yet they are only about half-an-hour's ride in the London Underground, and perhaps a short bus ride, and the fare costs less than the price of a pint of beer at your local. I have asked several people who have visited London, what particular place impressed itself most in their minds, and they have always answered, "The London Underground." Yes, I too shall remember it as the most memorable feature of London when I return to Ceylon.

It is a pleasure to enter a station from the bitter cold outside and to feel the warm air swirl round your face. Stations are air-conditioned, summer or winter. The temperature is never below 60 degrees Fahrenheit or above 70 degrees. The station is bright and cheerful after the drabness of the street. You may buy your evening paper here from the little sad-faced man with the walrus moustache who knows you as a "regular" and wishes you a cheery "good-evening." He has stood there wistfully by the station, in the same place, for years. His friend has probably gone round the corner for a cup of tea, but



he has left a pile of his papers behind on an overturned soap-box. People take their paper from the pile and drop a penny on the box. I have never noticed anyone being dishonest about paying for his paper, whether it is a penny or a twopenny one. If you have put down a shilling or a half-crown, you collect your own change, and you don't cheat, because the newspaper seller thinks he can trust you. The station is a convenient meeting place, and there is a soldier waiting for his sweetheart, and beyond him some girls and a young man who are probably waiting to keep appointments or perhaps to use the public telephones when they are unengaged. If you are in need of some books, periodicals or stationery, there is a stationer's at every station entrance.

Certain stations are even more impressive, and house tobacconists, confectioners, fruit-sellers and drapers. South Kensington Station proudly displays an antique-shop where one may buy a Chinese Buddha as large as a fireplace, or a miniature Indian ivory elephant smaller than a pea. Sloane Square has a buffet where you can buy "intoxicating drinks" as the notice says. Further down the line there are display windows in Piccadilly Station where one may gaze at the latest creations in evening gowns, shoes or hats. There are occasional exhibitions of pictures and photographs and Kitchen Front Exhibitions at Charing Cross station.

Three halfpence for a ticket is the modest price you are asked to pay for a short journey in the Underground, and for the experience of watching this triumph of modern engineering skill in operation. It used to be a penny in peace-time, and one then used to think of the Underground as a penny paradise where a penny in a slot-machine worked miracles producing cigarettes, matches, dried raisins, chocolates, throat pastilles or your name-plate, stamped by yourself. The slot-machines are now, alas, empty, but I hope that it will not be long before they are full again to work their wonders on unsuspecting travellers. The Underground is also a paradise of posters. The lifts that take you down silently to your train are covered

with posters from the roof downwards. Rooms to let with hot and cold water at 25s. a week, toothpastes that are promised would transform your teeth into pearls, variety shows, concerts and other distractions to lighten the boredom of the black-out hours, are advertised. Posters also adorn the sides of the tunnel down which the escalators or moving staircases run, the walls of the tube platform, and the corridors leading up to it. As you travel deeper and deeper underground the posters get bigger and bigger, until at the tube platform where you wait for the train you are confronted with giant cakes of soap, bottles of beer and chubby-faced girls of great proportions sipping Ovaltine or lemonade through delicate straws. The platforms are brightly lit, unlike the Paris Métro, and the atmosphere is convivial. You always find that your friends are good-humoured standing there sixty feet below ground level beside you. It may be that the sense of isolation from the more noisy world above makes them care-free; but I think that the large gay posters and the bright lights must induce a heightened spirit in people. I have always admired the posters issued by the London Transport which are cheerful and colourful. Some of the best artists in England have contributed to these subterranean art galleries, and I can remember seeing posters by Anna Zinkeisen, McKnight Kauffer, John Banting, Paul Nash, Fred Taylor who is perhaps the best poster artist in England, pictures of circus life by Dame Laura Knight and sunny seascapes by Charles Pears. What especially pleased me was to notice that modern conceptions of art were not taboo with the London Transport Board as exemplified in the posters of that delightful team of painters who work together, Eckersley and Lomers.

The war has unfortunately curtailed the issuing of these posters, but there is a very jolly set of new posters on the Undergrounds by David Langdon presenting Billy Brown of London Town, who is a new character to me, although he may be founded on tradition also, like the popular concept of the British bulldog nature. He is a bowler-hatted, black-coated



figure with a cheerful impish face, pin-striped trousers, a rolled-up umbrella. He is always giving good advice about how to behave to a crowd of less impish looking people who don't carry umbrellas and are not so prominent in their lighter clothing.

I copied this verse about Billy Brown from a Langdon poster because it amused me very much :

Billy is standing in a queue  
As we all must sometimes do.  
Queueing in these days of Rush  
Means you don't have any crush.  
And the seconds saved would lend  
Extra wings to journey's end.  
But, says Billy, see you choose  
The proper one of several queues.

Talking of London in war-time reminds me of queues and queueing, because it is a very English institution. In Paris when one wants to board a bus he takes a numbered ticket from the "stop" post and waits for it. This is a fair scheme to ensure that those who come first, board first. But this arrangement is not suited to London. It is cumbersome and difficult to operate as passengers increase. London prefers the queue, and the Londoner has usually preferred it. The national quality of order and fairness among the people finds public expression in the queue, and jockeying for position in the Underground ticket halls is practically unknown. There seems to have been a queue for Noah's ark. Noah deserves to be famous if only for that. The queue is symbolic of the war spirit prevailing among the Londoners, and that is why I have mentioned it. Londoners will queue with perfect nonchalance for hours on end on a cold day, and with good humour, to see a play or a picture. Nowadays they troop cheerfully into the Underground carrying their bedding, to shelter for the night. Entrance is by tickets which are issued free on application, and which allocate a reserved place for each individual. When the bombing first began they were not allowed to shelter in the

"Tubes." But the shelterers had their own way because they bought penny fares and made legal their entry into the station platforms. A system of season tickets was then introduced, and it has eliminated the tiresome queueing that was once necessary to secure places.

The shelterers are well looked after. Most stations have a resident medical officer and nurses. From six to ten in the evening and from five to seven in the morning they are served with hot meat pies, fruit tarts, cakes, buns and cups of tea or cocoa for a very low charge. Since there is not room on the platforms for canteens, waitresses bring refreshments round to the shelters in wicker baskets slung round their shoulders. Food train Specials are provided by the London Transport to bring the food to distribution centres. Gramophone concerts have been arranged by the ENSA, and those of the shelterers capable of providing entertainment are allowed to exercise their talents. Classes for children have also been arranged in some shelters. Many of the Underground stations were gaily decorated last Christmas, and the neon lights specially erected for the occasion blazed out the season's greetings. There was even dancing on the platform for all.

A new spirit of comradeship has been born among the shelterers. It is obvious that many go there not to escape the bombs, but because they like being together, and exchanging conversation. This is the new spirit, I think, that will emerge from this present world chaos, and it is a state I feel sure we are all looking forward to.



T. S. ELIOT

By J. M. TAMBIMUTTU

THE door is marked THOMAS STEARNS, you knock, and enter. The office is very small, and there is a single window overlooking the grey drabness of London's rooftops. Papers and books are strewn about the floor and on the table—proofs of books, manuscripts—for you are at the offices of one of England's largest publishers. A tall man, slimly built, with dark hair, now slightly greying, rises from the swivel chair to greet you. "How do you do?" He motions you to a chair with a smile of recognition and sinks back into his seat with a slow, careful motion. You are with T. S. Eliot, who is the only great English poet living; that is, the only poet who will be read in years to come, even when it is fashionable to ignore him.

Mr. Eliot's life has been described by Richard Church as one of a "Search for Foundations." The young Eliot, appalled by the hollowness of New England culture where success counted in terms of sky-scrapers and cigars, gave vent to his cynicism in a series of satirical poems, indicating the shallowness of middle-class life:

Miss Nancy Ellicot  
Strode across the hills and broke them,  
Rode across the hills and broke them,  
The barren New England hills—  
Riding to hounds  
Over the cow-pasture.

Miss Nancy Ellicot smoked  
And danced all the modern dances;  
And her aunts were not quite sure how they felt about it,  
But they knew that it was modern.

Upon the glazen shelves kept watch  
Matthew and Waldo, guardians of the faith,  
The army of unalterable law.

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T. S. ELIOT

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This is no more than a piece of youthful exuberance expressing the spiritual bankruptcy of his American cultural background. But the first three lines have something of the precise rhythm and literary austerity that were to mark Mr. Eliot's later work. There is also the use of pure vowel sounds that marks the born musician and the poet who feels deeply. I cannot discuss this point here, but the innumerable consonantal words and impure vowel sounds that Shelley and Swinburne, say, use, show not only that they were dynamic rather than static but also that their emotional adventures were of a superficial nature. Keats and Shakespeare are examples to the contrary. They use far more pure vowel sounds.

Mr. Eliot, in his search for foundations, came back to the country of his origin, England, only to witness the death-struggles of a culture without values or stability. The Georgian poets of the time, in response to the crumbling of older conventions and attitudes, adopted an eclectic traditionalism, limited, refined, carefully hedged round, and within their narrow confines sang confidently about the rural acres they loved best—Grantchester or Littleholme, or for romantic relief about Far Western places—Chimborazo and Cotopaxi. The poetry is thin, there is no more in it than meets the eye. It is all statement on one level. The idea of the Georgians was retrenchment, and they kept their gaze averted from anything that might remind them of change. Retrenchment of another kind was effected by another group, called the Imagists, who endeavoured to seriously narrow down the technique and language of poetry to avoid the flabbiness which was the result of attempts to practice in a worn-out tradition. The Georgians attempted to save tradition by limitation of subject-matter, and achieved wateriness, the Imagists attempted the same thing by limitation of technique, and achieved hardness and precision even though these qualities were often accompanied by triviality. Here is an imagist poem by T. E. Hulme, who supplied the philosophic background for the movement, having learnt it mostly from Oriental sources:

4 \*



I walked abroad,  
And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge  
Like a red-faced farmer. . . .

O God, make small  
The old star-eaten blanket of the sky,  
That I may fold it round me and in comfort lie.

Now pass I to the final river  
Ignominiously, in a sack, without a sound,  
As any peeping Turk to the Bosphorus.

The images are precise and communicate visual impressions accurately, but they do not cohere together organically to give a total experience.

Mr. Eliot was influenced by these Imagists, as he was by the French Symbolists. But instead of concentrating on the expressive power of the single image, as they did, he concentrated rather on the relation of these images to the poem as a whole. He gave the poems an organic quality. With his fine sense of form and of attitude (both qualities absent from Imagist verse), he was able to give his poetry a dynamic quality seldom if ever found among his contemporaries when he started writing. Mr. Eliot gave imagism a dialectic. Let me read a few lines from his "The Hollow Men":

We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!  
Our dried voices, when  
we whisper together  
are quiet and meaningless,  
as wind in dry grass  
Or rats' feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar.

When Mr. Eliot writes "We are the hollow men | We are the stuffed men," we cannot say whether they are just and accurate images until we have read the whole poem. Other adjectives might be equally descriptive of the kind of men he wants to

describe, but these are the only appropriate ones in the context, and they combine effectively with the other images in the poem to express his mood. The Imagists wrote in naturalistic images, Mr. Eliot uses organic imagery. This is, of course, not a prerogative of Mr. Eliot alone. All great poets use images organically.

Eliot was able to do this, because instead of trying to escape tradition (which was the way the Imagists and Georgians reacted to the disintegration of values) he returned to an older scheme of values which he expressed in his work. He also had positive beliefs about which I shall speak later. Thus did Mr. Eliot bring dialectic into modern poetry, which had been banished from it for some time.

In his preface to "For Lancelot Andrews," Mr. Eliot says that his attitude in the book is Classicist in literature, Royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion. Thus was the American wanderer to find his foundations that he had been groping after. When he calls himself classicist Mr. Eliot uses the word in the sense that T. E. Hulme used it. It is difficult to say how much Mr. Eliot owes to Hulme, and it is not important to know that. Both writers reject romantic individualism and the liberalism which produced the state of affairs existing in the early part of the twentieth century. Both believe in the concept of Original Sin and reject the proposition which springs from Rousseau that man is by nature wonderful and of unlimited powers, "and if hitherto he has not appeared so, it is because of external obstacles and fetters, which it should be the main business of social politics to remove." Mr. Eliot's (and Hulme's) is "the conviction that a man is by nature bad or limited, and can consequently only accomplish anything of value by disciplines, ethical, heroic or political. In other words, it believes in Original Sin." Mr. Eliot believes in discipline, form and control: Da, Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata, says the thunder in "The Waste Land," which translated from the Sanskrit means—give, sympathise, control. And the poem ends—"Shantih, shantih, shantih"—which means—"the peace that passeth understanding."



"The Waste Land" is the most important single poem of the twentieth century, though not his best; it is a hall-mark in modern poetry, and it has given its name to a period. The basis of the poem is a multiple myth deriving largely from Jessie L. Weston's book, *From Ritual to Romance*, and partly from other sources, such as the Upanishads and Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. He calls into service almost all the great myths of the world, the story of the grail, vegetation myths, the Christian story of the resurrection and several others, and the whole poem is about the death and resurrection of the spirit. In this poem he attempts to speak the voice of ages, using all tongues, using all myths, with the voice of universal man. If the modern world has no beliefs, he writes in terms of all beliefs. The poem does not seem to state a belief, but his belief in the importance of belief. "The Waste Land" is not a pessimistic poem—that there are no values and there never can be any. It ends with the thunder speaking its message of salvation, and the descent of fertilising rain.

Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.  
Shantih, shantih, shantih.

## SCIENCE AND MODERN POETRY

By C. H. WADDINGTON

I WANT in this talk to consider the influence of science on English poetry since the last war. Of course there won't be time to go into it in complete detail. Science is a very large and complex part of modern intellectual life, and there are innumerable ways in which it influences all the arts. For instance, the development of science is continually adding new words to the language. Now poets usually employ a richer vocabulary than ordinary speech. In some periods, for instance, in the eighteenth century, the poets used so many peculiar words that they practically amounted to a special language, the so-called poetic diction. There was, of course, a reaction against that; and just before the last war, the Georgian poets were using a language which was as close to ordinary speech as they could make it. After that war, a new reaction the other way set in—not so much in the words poets used, but in the way they used them. Poetry became, in fact, extremely difficult for the ordinary man to understand. Although this difficulty was mainly in what one might call grammar, and not so much in words, one does find that some poets did begin using a number of rather technical scientific terms. For instance, you get Empson using words like "irrotational," "potential function," "asynchronous," "agglutinate." And one finds poets using as images the phenomena which can usually only be seen inside the laboratory. Thus Empson again, in a poem called "Camping Out," describes a girl cleaning her teeth into a lake, and writes, "Soap tension the star pattern magnifies"; referring to the formation of a monomolecular layer on the surface of the water and its effect on the surface tension. That, I should guess, is going a bit too far for most educated people to follow.